

May 23, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cantwell, Chair McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member Cruz, and Ranking Member Pallone:

As former leaders of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), we have worked together, on a bipartisan basis, to lay the foundation for America's global wireless leadership. Although our policy priorities at times differed, we share an understanding that central to Americans' wireless success is the FCC's spectrum auction authority. That authority helped herald an unprecedented and thriving U.S. wireless ecosystem, enabling wireless providers to deliver mobile connectivity throughout the country, changing how Americans work, live, and play, and establishing the U.S. as a focal point for innovation and mobile commerce. Yet despite this success and bipartisan support, the FCC's auction authority lapsed on March 9, 2023—for the first time in history. Your Committees have been champions for wireless and for auctions, and we urge Congress to restore the agency's spectrum auction authority as soon as practicable.

The FCC pioneered spectrum auctions thirty years ago and has held 100 spectrum auctions since then, generating more than \$233 billion in revenue for the federal government. Wireless providers have deployed auctioned spectrum to build next-generation networks, connecting Americans from anywhere and on the go, and advancing U.S. enterprise, while driving the creation of more than 4 million jobs. This success was recognized when America's spectrum auction architects were awarded with a Nobel Prize in 2020. Today, spectrum auctions are the preferred method to assign spectrum across the globe, making the absence of U.S. auction authority even more startling.

Failure to renew the FCC's spectrum auction authority augurs troubling consequences. With greenfield spectrum difficult to identify, spectrum auction authority is a critical building block in the complex and time-consuming process to reallocate spectrum to new uses. Auction proceeds can fund government agencies to relocate bands with upgraded systems, helping to maintain U.S. global leadership in the wireless ecosystem. Delay in renewing auction authority risks ceding a global competitive advantage to other countries, particularly China, which has been aggressively making spectrum available for 5G and investing in next-generation wireless technologies to

capture global markets. This all at a time when our national security and global economic leadership are increasingly at risk from hostile nations. Reinstating auction authority is vital to addressing these issues and ensuring U.S. leadership before global standard-setting fora and the upcoming World Radiocommunication Conference.

We therefore urge Congress to pass a bipartisan solution that reinstates the FCC's spectrum auction authority and avoids the unnecessary threats to the thriving wireless ecosystem that we worked to support.

Respectfully Submitted,

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